**Yes-No-Why? with Think-Ink-Link and Power Sentence**

1. Pose a statement or a question. It can have a best answer or be completely open-ended. Some examples follow.

* *Calling on individual students and then posing questions is a proven way to practice or deepen content knowledge.*
* *Sixty minutes of homework per night is appropriate for most fifth grade students.*

1. **Think**:  Have students think (quietly and independently) through their response. To encourage critical thinking, ask students to consider potential responses from various relevant perspectives.
   * subjective (what I believe/feel)
   * empirical (what the research says)
   * pragmatic (what is practical)
   * rhetorical (what the words require, e.g., words like *prove, all, none, never* are often too powerful to be true)
   * legal (what is required/defensible according to law)
   * innovative (what might be possible)
   * others!
2. **Ink**:  Prompt everyone to write a response in one or two **Power Sentences.** A power sentence is a complete sentence that expresses a clear, compelling idea. Consider providing a **Sentence Stem** such as “I agree/disagree with this assertion because…”
3. **Link**:  Prompt partner sharing of power sentences. Encourage revision and further refinement. Monitor responses; note a few strong examples for group sharing.
4. Debrief the prompt with the whole group (**Interaction Sequence—Intentional, Random, Volunteer Selection** for individual turns).
   * (Intentional Selection) Ask students previously noted for strong responses to share. If a best answer exists, be sure it comes out in these responses.
   * (Random Selection) Select one or two random students to share.
   * (Volunteers) Allow one or two volunteers to add.
   * Discuss, clarify, explain as necessary.
5. Debrief the strategies.
   * The **Yes-No-Why?** prompt asks students to have an idea and to justify it.  This can be a powerful exercise in critical thinking because students must consider different perspectives, apply what they know, and defend an answer. Yes-No-Why? can be effective when previewing new content and when practicing and deepening previously taught content.
   * **Power Sentences** can be an effective way to provide brief, focused, content-specific writing practice. It requires learners to summarize ideas into concise statements.
   * **Sentence Stems** require students to have academic discussions that go beyond chatting. Sentence stems are most powerful when students are rehearsing general academic language or important content vocabulary.
   * **Think - Ink - Link** (also Think-Write-Pair-Share) provides opportunities for students to refine and rehearse responses, and it helps ensure that students achieve public success.
   * **Interaction Sequence** is a protocol for soliciting individual student responses in a way that encourages students’ public success and allows for effective discussion. Intentional turns ensure that good answers are heard by the entire group and reinforced. Random turns keep all students accountable. Volunteers encourage innovative thinking and multiple perspectives.

Variations:

* Omit the various perspectives; just ask each student to defend his or her position.
* Have students defend a “yes” response and a “no” response before selecting a “best response.”

Example Yes-No-Why? Prompts (just a few to get you thinking):

* Is *this* (a particular piece of writing, artwork, project, etc.) effective at reaching its audience?
* *This* (a particular process) is the most efficient way to solve *a particular* problem.
* *This word* (a particular word) is the most effective word to convey the writer’s intent.
* *This word* has the same meaning as *another word*.
* If someone is bothering me in class (or another behavior), it’s okay to tell the teacher right away.